

CalWORKs Bulletin

May 12, 1998

California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs

Issue 2

Did You Know That

- Regarding outcome data on welfare recipients: Minnesota found a 64% increase in employment among public aid recipients after treatment; a special Florida treatment program for pregnant or postpartum women and their children found a 76% increase in employment or school enrollment after treatment; and Ohio found a substantial decline in the amount of work missed by recipients, as well as a 15% reduction in welfare payments.
- According to a recent Urban Institute study, welfare recipients with substance abuse problems are as likely to work as other recipients - 63% worked at some point in the current or previous year, compared to 58% of recipients without a substance abuse problem. These recipients are less likely to work steadily, however, with only 15% working full-time, year-round, as compared to 22% of all recipients.

Q's and A's

Q: Can the County AOD Program Administrator contract with for-profit providers for CalWORKs substance abuse services?

A: No. Section 11325.8(b) of the Welfare and Institutions Code precludes the county AOD from contracting for CalWORKs services with for-profit providers.

Substance Abuse and Welfare Reform

Designing Welfare-to-Work Programs for Families Facing Personal or Family Challenges: Lessons from the Field, (Urban Institute), LaDonna Pavetti, et al and (American Institutes for Research), Julie Isaacs 1996.

As states move toward full implementation of TANF they will deal with families facing a number of problems that are a barrier to work, such as substance abuse. This report summarizes information from case studies of eight programs which serve special populations.

To Order: The Urban Institute (202) 833-7200

Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform, (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation), Amy Brown 1997.

Presented as a "How-to Guide", this document reviews a strategy called "work first" as one successful model for states to implement as a welfare to work option. It summarizes the knowledge gleaned from implementation to-date and offers suggestions for replication.

To Order: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (212) 532-3200

What's Up In Other States

- **Oregon** has a federal waiver to require compliance with substance abuse treatment as a condition of receiving aid. They provide local offices with considerable latitude for deciding how to provide substance abuse services to recipients. Local offices have the option to test recipients for drugs but most have not elected to do so. In most local welfare or JOBS offices, mental health and/or alcohol/drug abuse counselors are outstationed to identify recipients in need of treatment services and to provide counseling.

Initially, local offices in Oregon only addressed substance abuse issues when such problems interfered with participation in work-related activities. Over time, however, Portland and other localities have instituted a broader substance abuse education component as part of their upfront employability and job search process for all applicants and recipients. This change developed in response to staff concerns that some recipients successfully completed employment and training programs only to fail an employer's drug test. The substance abuse education component does include substance abuse screening using the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI).

- **Utah** has hired trained counselors (generally social workers) for its local welfare offices who are responsible for families with the severest problems, including substance abuse. These workers also supervise other staff working with difficult cases and train eligibility and self-sufficiency staff to be able to identify these problems. In addition, there are on-site mental health and alcohol/drug abuse counselors in some of the local offices. Utah has found that substance abuse problems tend not to surface right away but rather become apparent when a recipient is failing to comply with program participation requirements. Utah tries to maintain its principal program focus on employment. Much of its substance abuse treatment is short-term to allow recipients to quickly move on to work.

Welfare Reform Web Sites

The Urban Institute:

www.urban.org/hotopics.htm

Department of Labor Welfare to Work Initiative:

www.doleta.gov/ohrw2w/index.htm

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse @ Columbia University:

www.casacolumbia.org

If you know of other web sites which may be useful, please fax them for inclusion in the next CalWORKs Bulletin.

Things to Consider

- ♦ CalWORKs is providing the AOD field with a "window of opportunity" and a challenge to expand services, redefine and restructure operations, think outside the box to accomplish implementation, and reach a population of unserved substance abusers.
- ♦ Are you tracking the effectiveness of your screening and assessment tools for this population?